

LUCIUS BURCH STATE NATURAL AREA

CLASS I SCENIC-RECREATIONAL STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Shelby **ACREAGE:** 1,013
7.5° QUADRANGLE: Ellendale **OWNERSHIP:** Shelby County
PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Coastal Plain **YEAR DESIGNATED:** 1988

DESCRIPTION

Shelby Farms is a 1,013-acre natural area located in Germantown in Shelby County and is a part of a larger 6,000-acre county park. The natural area is a remnant of historic river meanders, bald cypress-water tupelo swamps, bottomland hardwood forests, and open river channel habitat. Unfortunately, much of this ecosystem has been significantly altered as a result of change in hydrology and the invasion of common privet, an invasive exotic pest plant. Shelby Farms offers passive recreation activities such as day hiking, bird watching, and wildlife viewing within the metropolitan Memphis area. The natural area is a relatively large unfragmented forest that follows the banks of the Wolf River. It provides a refugium for forest dwelling birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians within an urbanized environment.

Shelby Farms Forest is a place where impacts on the resource can be interpreted and used as an educational tool to demonstrate the ecological effects of river channelization (straightening of the river channel) and the impacts of invasive exotic pest plants. This outdoor living classroom is reacting to the change in environmental conditions since it was channelized. Test plots for the removal and treatment of common privet can be found in the natural area. Common privet is native to Asia and has been widely used as hedges in urban landscaping. It has spread throughout the understory at Shelby Farms Forest and has displaced many of the native species. Its impact is indicative of a serious problem facing all urban natural areas where adjacent landowners unwittingly plant invasive exotic pest plants. These landscaping practices create the seed source from which invasive exotics are distributed into the natural areas by animals, wind, or water. Privet has invaded at Shelby Farms since drier site conditions were created by the channelization of the Wolf. This invasion often occurs when a natural ecological disturbance regime has been altered or where a native landscape has been severely changed due to development. Historically, the site was bottomland forest and a part of the Wolf River floodplain. This is evident by the occurrence of large cypress trees that are periodically encountered in relatively dry habitats. The state listed Copper iris (*Iris fulva*) is found here.

SITE MANAGEMENT

Shelby Farms (Lucius Burch SNA), 500 Pine Lake Dr., Memphis, TN 38134, phone 901-382-0235 Division of Natural Heritage, 401 Church St., 14th Floor L&C Tower, Nashville, TN 37243, phone (615) 532-0431.

PUBLIC ACCESS

Public access is allowed; parking and trails are provided. Contact Shelby Farms Park for trail maps, park hours, and natural area information.

DIRECTIONS

Take I-40 to Memphis, exit I-40 onto I-240, exit Walnut Grove Road East. On Walnut Grove Rd., cross the Wolf River and follow the signage for Shelby Farms Park.